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VOL. 5 NO. 6
SECOND ISSUE OF
MARCH 1975
ISSUE #104

NORFOLK-ROANOKE-CINCINNATI-CHICAGO

Read Down — *(Local Time)* — Read Up

New! The Mountaineer

Operates Daily

55		Train Number	54
⊨✕🍴	Miles	Type of Service	⊨✕🍴
1 05 p	0	Dp...NORFOLK, VA (Lamberts Point) (EDT)..Ar	6 10 p
1 45 p	26	...Suffolk...	5 10 p
e 2 50 p	84	...Petersburg (River St.) ⊕...	e 4 05 p
e 3 55 p	132	...Nottoway County Station (Crewe) ⊕... (Serving Crewe and Blackstone)	e 3 05 p
4 30 p	153	...Farmville...	2 25 p
5 45 p	205	...Lynchburg (5100 Woodall Road)...	1 15 p
e 6 10 p	226	...Bedford... ⊕...	e12 45 p
6 55 p	254	Ar } ...ROANOKE... { Dp	12 10 p
7 10 p	254	Dp } { Ar	11 55 a
e 8 00 p	287	...Christiansburg (Blacksburg)..⊕...	e10 55 a
e 8 55 p	326	...Narrows, VA (Pearisburg) ⊕...	e 9 50 a
9 50 p	355	Ar } ...Bluefield, WV... { Dp	9 00 a
10 00 p	355	Dp } { Ar	8 50 a
e11 15 p	388	...Welch... ⊕...	e 7 20 a
e 1 15 a	454	...Williamson, WV..⊕...	e 5 30 a
3 35 a	532	...Tri-State Station, KY (Catlettsburg)... (Serving Ashland, KY and Kenova, WV)	3 13 a
7 15 a	683	Ar } ...CINCINNATI, OH..(EDT)... { Dp	11 32 p
7 40 a	683	Dp } (River Road Sta.) { Ar	11 07 p
e 8 30 a	749	...Richmond, IN (300 N. 3rd St.) ⊕..(EST)...	e 8 25 p
e 9 30 a	789	Ar...Muncie ⊕...Dp	e 7 25 p
12 45 p	849	Ar } ...INDIANAPOLIS... { Dp	● 4 35 p
—	849	Dp } (See note below) { Ar	10 35 p
e 9 30 a	789	Dp...Muncie ⊕...Ar	e 7 25 p
e11 05 a	846	Ar...Peru ⊕...Dp	e 6 00 p
dt	855	...Lafayette, IN..(EST)...	dt
2 42 p	968	Ar...CHICAGO, IL (Union Sta.)..(CDT)...Dp	2 35 p

☞ **NOTE**—Motor coach service between Muncie and Indianapolis operated by A.B.C. Coach Lines. Separate ticket required and should be purchased from A.B.C. Coach Lines. Passengers make own arrangements between Amtrak stations and motor coach terminals.

LETTERS

Reference your article by Paul Rayton and Glenn Lee in the first March issue. I rode the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR in late February and I am in complete agreement with their diagnoses and predictions.

Regarding the Western Pacific portion of their article, I want to quote the following from the "Report to the President and the Congress," "Amtrak, State of Rail Passenger Service - Effectiveness of the Act" by the Interstate Commerce Commission, dated October 31, 1971:

APPENDIX A - PAGE 7: "There are two ways of alleviating this problem: (1) Reroute the Amtrak train between Ogden and Oakland so as to serve Salt Lake City. This would involve usage of Western Pacific trackage between Salt Lake City and Wells, Nevada, but would not deprive any town along the Southern Pacific between Ogden and Wells of passenger service as there are no stops between these points at the present time. Amtrak is enpowered to enter into trackage rights agreements with nonmember railroads such as the Western Pacific for just such a purpose and the Commission is authorized to order a railroad to enter into such a contract if it refuses to do it voluntarily."

Shall we all unite and get petitions together to get Amtrak to force the Western Pacific into providing service?

William L. Staiger

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

First let me say that I really like your publication, RTN... I hope, in general, you never change... However, I do have some criticism, most of it so minimal I wouldn't bother to write. Unfortunately, after the First March issue, I am forced to write and voice my serious objections to the views expressed...in your editorial on page 11. It is difficult for me to comprehend how you could allow what must be an obsession with you to so cloud your mind that you would put in print, in a national magazine, the proposed schedule for #5 and #6. The only purpose of the proposed schedule is to provide the RGZ with connections at both ends of its run.

Just what is the RGZ? It is a private railroad's holdout against Amtrak. It is probably one of the most non-essential trains in the National Railroad System. It is, in short, a cute little 3-times-a-week tourist train. Yet, you wish to change the schedule of #5 and #6 to make better connections with this train. You would leave "thousands" of passengers stranded so that a few dozen extra people could ride the RGZ. What kind of narrow-minded reporting is this!

Since you don't appear to have an Amtrak timetable available to you, let me advise what your schedule change would do. Westbound you would destroy the SFZ as a convenient overnight train from Chicago to Denver. What family, with or without children, what businessman would want to arrive Denver at 6:30am... Yet you would cause this daily inconvenience so that connections can be made with a tri-weekly train. Both eastbound and westbound your proposed schedule would break connections with #7 & #8, the EMPIRE BUILDER, thereby making it impossible for passengers from Minneapolis-St. Paul (and to a lesser extent western points), Winona, LaCrosse, Wisconsin Dells and Columbus (Madison) to make a connection to and from Denver and west. But the #5 and #6 would make good connections with the RGZ.

Your proposed westbound schedule would break connections with #361, the WOLVERINE... with #51 & 50, the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY and the new MOUNTAINEER... This brings the case instead of #5 & 6 changing its time. What not let the more simple answer be used? Why not have the RGZ change its schedule! The time the train arrives and leaves Salt Lake City is of little consequence since few people ride it at that point. Yet making connections at Denver could really increase the loads, as far west as Grand Junction.

(continued on next page)

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LETTERS (continued)

My proposed schedule would have the RGZ #17 leave Denver at 9:45am, arrive Grand Jct. 5:05pm and Salt Lake City 11:45pm (which isn't really too bad an arrival time). The schedule would have the RGZ #18 leave Salt Lake City at 2am, arrive Grand Jct. 8:10am, arrive Denver 4pm. Perhaps, since few people use the train from Grand Jct. to Salt Lake City, the train could be discontinued between these points. Such action would save the D&RGW a lot of money and with the increased loads between Grand Jct. and Denver could allow the train to survive a few more years.

H. Martin Swan

St. Paul, Minnesota

THE COVER STORY

New! The Mountaineer

Amtrak's newest experimental route began service with a press run on March 24. The Norfolk, VA to Cincinnati with thru cars to Chicago via the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, was first made public by former DOT Secretary Brinegar just before the June 30 deadline last year. The run had been included in an Amtrak appropriations bill passed by Congress, which included $2 million for the new route. The announcement was made at the same time that Chicago-Boston was chosen as the next yearly experimental route to be selected by the DOT Secretary, according to existing law. Knowledgeable sources are now talking about a fall, 1975 startup for Chicago-Boston; but Norfolk-Cincinnati is with us today.

The service had been the subject of some controversy, with cries from some quarters of undue Congressional influence on the selection of routes, resulting in an inequitable geographical distribution of Amtrak routes. As an experimental route, the present service must be maintained for at least 2 years to gauge public acceptance.

The March 24 press run got underway from Tri-State Station in Catlettsburg, KY and ran east to Norfolk. Tri-State is the spot where the new train, #54 & 55, breaks off or joins the consist of train 50 & 51, the RILEY. The inaugural train ran on a schedule different from the regular train timetable to allow ceremonies along the route. It left Tri-State at 7:30am and was due into Norfolk at 1am. (Inaugural ceremonies at the last 3 stops were scheduled for the following day using the first westbound train because of the late hour at these points: Nottoway County Station, Petersburg, Suffolk, and Norfolk.)

New Amtrak president Paul Reistrup took an active part in the inauguration, in contrast to the habit of his predecessor. For the first time, press invitations to the inaugural were mailed over the president's signature. Reistrup had taken the BROADWAY LIMITED to Chicago on March 21, and left there the 23rd on the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY to ride the inaugural train from Tri-State. Equipment for the first run had deadheaded from Chicago on March 22 on the RILEY. Reistrup rode the press train as far as Bluefield, WV, where he and Senator Byrd of West Virginia hopped onto a small jet back to Washington.

The consist of the press train was: Amtrak diesel 630; cars 2805 "Allegheny" 10/6 sleeper (ex-B&O "Schuykill"); 8380 "Dixie Traveler" lunch counter lounge; 5470 coach; 3401 lounge; coaches 5645, 5275, 5258; 1401 baggage-dorm. The first westbound run on Mar. 25 used the same consist, and the first revenue eastbound run on Mar. 25 had the following consist, which can be expected to be the standard one for the train: Amtrak diesel 579; sleeper 2680 (ex-SP 9000) 10/6; 8381 "Dixie Journey" lunch counter lounge; coaches 5658 & 5619; 1520 baggage-dorm.

Besides a "Tidewater-Midwest Schdules including Cumberland Service" which lists the RILEY, MOUNTAINEER, BLUE RIDGE, with SILVER STAR and Southern Rwy connections, Amtrak prepared a combination timetable and route brochure the the MOUNTAINEER/RILEY. Both of these were initially in short supply.

The press run found the customary large crowds at the various stops, with speeches, bands and politicians. A few revenue passengers found their way onto the press run. Reporter Don MacInnes was on the scene, and tells us that some stations have been re-

opened along the route, and several are new, temporary Amtrak portable stations. At Petersburg, the transfer point to the Florida trains, there was neither an open station nor a temporary station. Thirty minutes before train time a Red Cap from the other (Petersburg-Ettrick) station comes by to assist passengers. The two stops are 5 miles apart, making a cab ride necessary. Rumors going the rounds in Virginia are that trains 98-99, the RILEY connection to Newport News, will be altered or discontinued. The new train will make available much more West Virginia and Virginia mountain viewing during daylight, especially eastbound; and westbound during summer.

The following report by Dorr Tucker is reprinted from the Roanoke Chapter NRHS bulletin of 3/11: "Crews on 3 of the 5 N&W operating districts will make one daily round trip. Radford Division (Roanoke-Bluefield) crews will spend every night away from home--in Bluefield, while Norfolk Division crews will be home every night. On the east end of the Norfolk Division and on the Scioto Division two cr3ws will make a daily one-way trip as the new Amtrak trains (like old 3&4) should meet near Petersburg and west of Williamson. The most interesting and unusual operation is the unprecedented joint N&W-C&O run between Williamson and South Portsmouth, KY. Train 55 will head west out of Williamson at about the same time as old #3 in pre-Amtrak days. Upon arrival at Kenova Tower the train will leave the main line and head east about 3/4 mile thru the N&W freight yard before negotiating a 180° left hand curve which will place 55 on the C&O main line at KV Cabin about 4000 feet east of the old Union Station. Without stopping, the train will head west across the Big Sandy River into Kentucky for 4 miles before arriving at the new Catlettsburg station. After a brief pause the train will continue 8 miles thru Ashland to Chessie's Russell terminal where 55 will be combined with #51 from Washington in the pre-dawn darkness. With C&O men in command the train will head west toward Cincinnati stopping only at South Portsmouth to discharge the N&W Scioto Division crew. Yes, the N&W operating personnel out of Williamson will deadhead the last 27 miles! Eastbound the operation will proceed in reverse starting with the crew 'registering on' at Portsmouth and riding a mile to the south side of the Ohio River in the callers truck."

THE ROCK ISLAND GOES INTO BANKRUPTCY

With sources of funds exhausted, the Rock Island Railroad announcedon March 17 that it is filing for reorganization under federal bankruptcy laws. The nation's 13th-largest railroad said that it would stop accepting shipments on March 31. It set April 12 as a date for closing down. The bankruptcy plan is to be the subject of a U.S. district court hearing in Chicago on March 28. The ICC has granted the railroad permission to add surcharges to freight car movements in an effort to provide it with more cash to keep it operating another 60 days. A 7% general freight rate increase was also approved by the ICC for all railroads, and should help the Rock Island also. The ICC is working on a plan for dividing up the railroad among other carriers. The Union Pacific late this month formally gave notice that it is no longer interested in acquiring part of the Rock Island. The UP plan had been mired down for ten years in ICC red tape. The Illinois Dept. of Transportation is asking Amtrak to take over operation of the Rock Island passenger trains. Rock Island was one of three railroads that elected not to join Amtrak in 1971. The Regional Transportation Authority in Chicago will take over operation of Rock Island's commuter trains, and has approved the submission of a request to UMTA for funds to purchase 50 bilevel commuter cars and 21 locomotives for that service.

DOT SECRETARY MEETS THE PRESS

On Sunday, March 23, newly-appointed Secretary of Transportation William Coleman, Jr., faced a panel of newsmen on nationwide and answered questions which were mostly about rail service. When asked by transportation writer Stephen Aug whether he thought Amtrak could become profitable, Coleman replied that the administration has prepared a bill to fix the amount of federal aid to Amtrak over the next 4 years, "and this is all you can look to." He wants less and less federal commitment to Amtrak, saying that every time we go to Congress for money for Amtrk we get tacked on another experimental route "which all lose money." Aug then asked whether Am-

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S MUCH-REROUTED FLORIDIAN has been rerouted onto the Monon Railroad out of Chicago, as of March 14, and runs nonstop between Chicago and Louisville on that line. During the period of March 17-20, however, it was rerouted on ICG where it ran nonstop Chicago-Birmingham because of an L&N bridge washed out south of Nashville. Our Jack Ferry rode the train on the Monon a few days ago and reports that it's an interesting run. In Lafayette, Indiana the train runs about 2½ miles in a downtown street on which the traffic lights are synchronized with the train's progress..... AMTRAK'S NEW TRAIN between Minneapolis and Duluth (and including Duluth's sister city, Superior, Wisconsin, just across the state line) will become operational with an inaugural run on April 15, with regular service starting the 16th. The new train, a 403-b operation partly funded by the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin, will be named the ARROWHEAD, and will connect in both directions with the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA.....

* * *

AMTRAK WILL DISCONTINUE, at the April 27 schedule changeover, two Hiawatha Service trains: train 320, the 6:05am departure from Milwaukee; and train 331, the 10pm departure from Chicago. Train 329, the weekend counterpart of #331, will continue to run, but only on Sunday..... "FLORIDA INFLATION BREAK" is what Amtrak ads in the Midwest are currently calling a coming fare reduction on the FLORIDIAN, to be effective April 7 to June 30. While the one-way coach fare is now $74, the bargain promotion, done to stimulate more off-peak traffic, is a roundtrip fare of $99 between Chicago and Florida. The fare is allowable any day of the week, and family plan does not apply to it, but children under 12 are still half-fare. Amtrak's ads point out that the "true costs" of driving are now estimated to be 17¢ per mile, which means driving the 3172 miles round trip on the route would cost you $539.24. The rail fare is much less..... ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF Railroad has begun its work on upgrading the track on the PANAMA LIMITED route, as required by federal order. Two tie gangs are now working north of New Orleans..... WHAT'S COMING UP in the way of new trains? The state of Michigan is reportedly now working on a Chicago-Toronto day train via Port Huron..... AMTRAK HAS HAD some trouble with the delivery of seats for the French Turbos now in Chicago. This will delay the startup of Chicago-Detroit Turboliner service, so it is now expected to begin around the time of Amtrak's May 1 Anniversary. The schedules of this Turboliner route will most likely be different than those given here two issues ago: it is said that Amtrak president Reistrup vetoed the bunched-up departure times of the trains out of Chicago, and Amtrak will probably go to a midday Chicago departure instead of the 4:10 and 5:15pm combination. The new trains may get tried out on the Chicago-St. Louis run before the Detroit service starts up.....

* * *

THE RE-ROUTING OF Amtrak's LONE STAR thru Dallas comes one step closer with the approval by the USRA of a $19 million loan to the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy) Railroad. The loan is for the rebuilding of 110 miles of track in southern Texas, of which 48 miles would be used by the LONE STAR, which now runs on Santa Fe rails. If Amtrak's board of directors approves the re-routing, the Katy tracks from Temple to Dallas will be upgraded to permit 70mph passenger train speeds (60 is the current limit)..... IN MARIN COUNTY, California, officials are endorsing plans to restore passenger service to the Northwestern Pacific Railroad..... WHAT'S THE REASON for the Interstate Commerce Commission holding hearings on Amtrak service just at this time, when a new corporation president has just taken over and hasn't had time yet to improve things? This didn't make sense to us until we realized that President Ford's new recommendation is to strip away the ICC's power over train discontinuances. So the ICC is engaged in a power play by showing its authority over Amtrak. And the ICC isn't alone in standing to lose control over passenger service: Congress will lose the authority as well (and that means you and me) if the Administration has its way. The Executive Branch alone, thru the DOT will control train service, and Amtrak's quasi-public character will be eliminated. Congress must, however, approve these changes.....

(continued on page 18)

Rail Canada

REVIVAL OF STREETCAR service on Toronto's Spadina route will cost $1.1 million if the service is to be restored in 1976, as now planned by TTC. This will be principally for track rehabilitation and replacement, new turning loops, and modernization of 22 streetcars. Service was abandoned on the route in the late 1940s, but much of the track was retained for emergency use. The more than 30 buses to be "bumped" will be assigned to suburban services.

MASSIVE COST INCREASES for labour, fuel and supplies may force a fare increase on the Toronto Transit system to 45¢ per ride, up from the present 30¢ fare. The system had been profitable until 1971. A deficit of $6.2 million in 1972 soared to $34 million in 1974, and may go to $57.6 million for 1975.

TORONTO'S TRANSIT SYSTEM has refused additional delivery of Hawker-Siddeley subway cars due to problems with power systems and brake controls. Only 18 of the 88 cars in the order have been accepted. Inauguration of full rush-hour service to Finch station on the N. Yonge subway has thus been delayed. The cars are being modified at the Thunder Bay plant of Hawker-Siddeley.

A RELUCTANCE BY U.S. Customs Service to eliminate customs charges on the Seattle-Victoria ferry service may delay or cancel the B.C. government's plans to return the ex-CP steamer "Princess Marguerite" to the run. Sources in Washington DC said that the proposed private operation by the 160-ft vessel "Avalon" (see last issue) caused Customs to back down on its earlier promise to eliminate charges in an effort to keep the Marguerite in operation. The private operator indicated he would pay customs charges for his 500-passenger boat. The B.C. government wants the charges eliminated.

HOW DOES CANADA evaluate Amtrak's Montreal-New York MONTREALER? An official evaluation comes in the Canadian Transport Commission's recent study of Amtrak effectiveness: "The MONTREALER was restored to service by Congress in 1972, as part of the 'International' amendment of the original act... Amtrak proceeded to use the MONTREALER almost as a guinea pig for testing service improvements: a service representative; young waiters and porters, both male and female; a lounge car called 'Le Pub,' featuring tables and lounge chairs, bar service, piano (with a piano player on weekends), and taped music; a dining car featuring good food at reasonable prices; package holidays for skiers and special facilities to handle their equipment.

"Despite equipment malfunctions, often attributable to the winter cold, poor track (especially on the bankrupt Boston & Maine), and the slow schedule, patronage has climbed. In first half 1974 over 1973, the increase was 49% to 88,000--an average of 243 passengers per train, not counting corridor traffic between Washington, New York, and Springfield, which more than doubles the load there.

"Though some of this additional ridership can be attributed to the energy shortage, it is clear that Amtrak's marketing efforts have been effective. So effective, in fact, that the train has been swamped by business travelers and other corridor passengers between Washington and New York. Its 17:05 departure northbound, dining car, 'Le Pub,' and overall atmosphere have made it so attractive to short-haul passengers that Amtrak has considered restricting its use to long-haul customers... No Metroliner, no turbotrain, no 100mph speeds--just a conventional train of redecorated and and refurbished equipment, but marketed with an emphasis on service attributes, rather than speed."

The CTC study concludes that "service features are important product attributes of passenger train service" and notes that in the pre-Amtrak period, railroads that maintained the highest service standards suffered significantly less loss of patronage in the days of declining rail travel. The study notes that Canadian National did similar things in the 1963-68 period and succeeded in doubling passenger miles and revenues. A mistake that CN made, however, was in failing to modernize its aging fleet of equipment, a move which would have saved it 30% of its total costs in 1968!

Inside Amtrak Headquarters

PART FIVE

BY PETER PUTNAM BRETZ

This time, I went down to the fifth floor to visit with Mr. Phil Held, Chief of Reservations. His office is at the far end of the building, nestled off the main hallway by a foyer. This is occupied by three desks whereat sit three mini-skirted secretaries. While I waited for Mr. Held, one of the girls offered to get me coffee. Between sips, my gaze wandered from the secretaries to the painting on the wall: horses dashing along the plains in flight from a thunderstorm. Presently, Mr. Held was ready and I began by stating my feeling that the ARTS system is the best thing that Amtrak has--when it works. But the question is, have there been increases in business since the computer went nationwide?

Held: Well, we are definitely more efficient with all the inventory in one central system, and from that one central location, everybody draws. Prior to ARTS we had exactly a hundred different places where we allocated space. I'd say we've increased ourload factors probably as much as 20% due to the increased efficiency of the computer.

RTN: Let's talk about some of the problems inherent in the system. I realize that in some cases it's just a matter of working them out, but others may be a matter of programming. Now, for example, if Amtrak doesn't deliberately oversell space--as some have claimed--how do we get over-sold cars on a regular basis on a number of trains?

Held: Some very real examples of why that would occur--let's use a Metroliner as an example, OK? If you plan on a 6-car consist, and all of a sudden the day of the train, two cars are shopped, we've already got the train sold, we're now down to four cars, so what to do? We're over-sold, on paper anyway. The cars were shopped because of problems with the equipment, say, but it reflects to the passenger as being oversold. Now, the same thing occurs with cars. In other words, on the BROADWAY as an example, all of the coaches are programmed as 52 seaters. About 30-40% of the time we substitute anywhere from 44 to 48-seaters for the 52s that are planned in the consist.

RTN: Well now, but then again, you have 60-seaters and 72-seaters going sometimes, too.

Held: Not planned,not in the planned consists. In other words, if you look at the consists for the BROADWAY and you have six coaches at 52 seats each, OK?--and now, all of a sudden, on the day of the train, you substitute three 44's for the 52's ...we are short some seats.

RTN: Isn't the BROADWAY programmed for 44-seat coaches to begin with?

Held: No, those are 52s in the planned consist which we receive from Operations. So you see this type of thing, unfortunately, really always reflects on the Reservations System. And it's unfortunate because there's no way that you can identify it other than a problem. There's no sense in saying to the passenger that it's an equipment problem. As far as he's concerned, it's an Amtrak problem.

RTN: Well, now, this brings up a rather interesting point. You know in advance that a car is going to be shopped?

Held: It's usually shopped at 5:00 in the morning.

RTN: In other words, you don't know two or three days in advance.

Held: No, we know each morning when we get an operational listing of what's going to operate that day. On the bottom, in the lower righthand corner, they'll tell us how many cars are shopped--bad ordered--, then they... once...frankly, once it reaches over sixteen we know we're in trouble--

something's happened. And certain Metroliner pairs as we call them get affected...and of course we can never go below four cars; so it's six cars affect-ed. Say #118-127 is going to operate today with four cars, but you've already sold six cars' worth. One of the trains on Sunday, a metroliner say, ran over some debris. Four cars get shopped that we hadn't planned on. We had been running well within our shop limitations of maintaining a schedule.

RTN: There's no way of advance planning then, it's on catch-as-catch-can basis day by day...you hope you have enough equipment, but a lot of the time you don't, and it's just tough for the passenger.

Held: On the Metroliners, you're operat-ing in a very tight situation--there's only "x" number of metroliner cars. I believe it's 60 cars and you need 45-46 to run the schedule.

RTN; Considering the normal shop, you have very few overflow.

Held: Never more than 1 or 2.

RTN; Let's get into conventional equip-ment--like on the BROADWAY. Those 52 seaters don't have leg-rests, and yet this is a long-distance train.

Held: I don't get involved in that aspect. Here in the slumbercoach, there are 24 and 8s--you sub a 16 and 4 or sometimes a full sleeper; you're trying to put 36 passengers into 22 spaces.

RTN: What do you do?

Held: Our first concern is up-grading the passengers. We don't hesitate to put a slumber-coach passenger in a roomette or a double-slumber coach pas-senger in a bedroom; we give them the next highest grade of accommodation if available.

RTN: He's never put back in coach?

Held: No, when we physically run out of space, we re-accommodate him. We give him the option at the station between him and the station manager whether he will fly or accept the coach seat.

RTN: Suppose the passenger insists on his pullman space in 24 hours. Will Amtrak put him up?

Held: Absolutely. We will over-night him. But, we don't like to keep people over-night simply because...

RTN: Because it costs money?

Held: No...we're not too concerned with that, we're more concerned about the service aspect. We really don't believe the customer wants to wait. It's not like an airline where you put him on an afternoon or evening flight from his original morning flight. Here with us, it's 24 hours--quite lengthy delay. We've done it several times in the summer in the Chicago area. There the West trains, specifically the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA and the EMPIRE BUILDER, misconnected with the BROADWAY and we didn't hesitate to put them up over-night to connect the following day.

RTN: What about the trainmen who complain that it's over-sold most of the time? Would that be legitimate?

Held: As I said before, we don't deli-berately over-sell. There are circum-stances over which we have no control. I'm not suggesting that anybody is do-ing anything wrong, because I can't prove it. But there's no way that any-one can prevent anybody that has ticket stock and a validator from is-suing a ticket against space he does not legitimately hold in the system.

RTN: Is this common? Is it a problem?

Held: No, not really. A problem that we've high-lighted is a passenger get-ting on with a child under 2 years old. She takes up 2 spaces, altho the ticket only authorizes one space. The con-ductor approaches the passenger, say-ing "you're only entitled to one space" and she says "I'm going to take up two anyway and what are you going to do about it/" If she makes a loud enough scene, we have to back off. So we don't get the same pure utilization ticket for ticket.

RTN: That's alright as long as the train isn't crowded. But if there aren't enough spaces, then will you still back off?

(continued on page 13)

ConRail

Out of the tangle of bankrupt railroads comes a plan to upgrade passenger service in 17 corridors

The United States Railway Association on Feb. 26 published its voluminous Preliminary System Plan for dealing with the property of the eight bankrupt Northeastern and Midwestern railroads--the Penn Central, Ann Arbor, Erie Lackawanna, Boston and Maine, Central of New Jersey, Lehigh Valley, Reading and the Lehigh & Hudson River.

Under the requirements of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973, which became law Jan. 2, 1974, the USRA was to plan a reasonable rail system for the Northeast/Midwest in lieu of the bankrupt roads, which system ConRail--the Consolidated Rail Corporation, an Amtrak-like entity--is to operate. (Additionally, the law set up a Rail Services Planning Office within the ICC to assist in this reorganization.)

The Preliminary Plan, somewhat like the preliminary Railpax system drawn up when Amtrak was being formed, is to be commented upon by interested parties so that a final rail system can be hashed out, which is to be presented to Congress for its approval by July 26. In the massive, 2-volume document, relatively little space is devoted to passenger trains, but they represent an important consideration in the reorganization plan.

The USRA's plan is to shift responsibility for passenger and commuter service within its region over to Amtrak and the various transit agencies. The Boston-Washington Northeast Corridor would be transferred completely to Amtrak, with about $2 billion investment figured to create high-speed passenger train service there. Following its legal mandate, the USRA assessed all feasible short-to-medium distance corridors within its domain and made recommendations for creation or upgrading of passenger service.

On the following two pages are a diagram and table giving information about these corridors, including the Northeast Corridor. Recommended frequency of service is shown on the diagrammatic map. Note from the table that USRA designated two levels of corridor service, level I (for the N.E. Corridor only) being for high-speed service, while the rest are level II, for 80-100mph operation, where public demand is deemed to be lower.

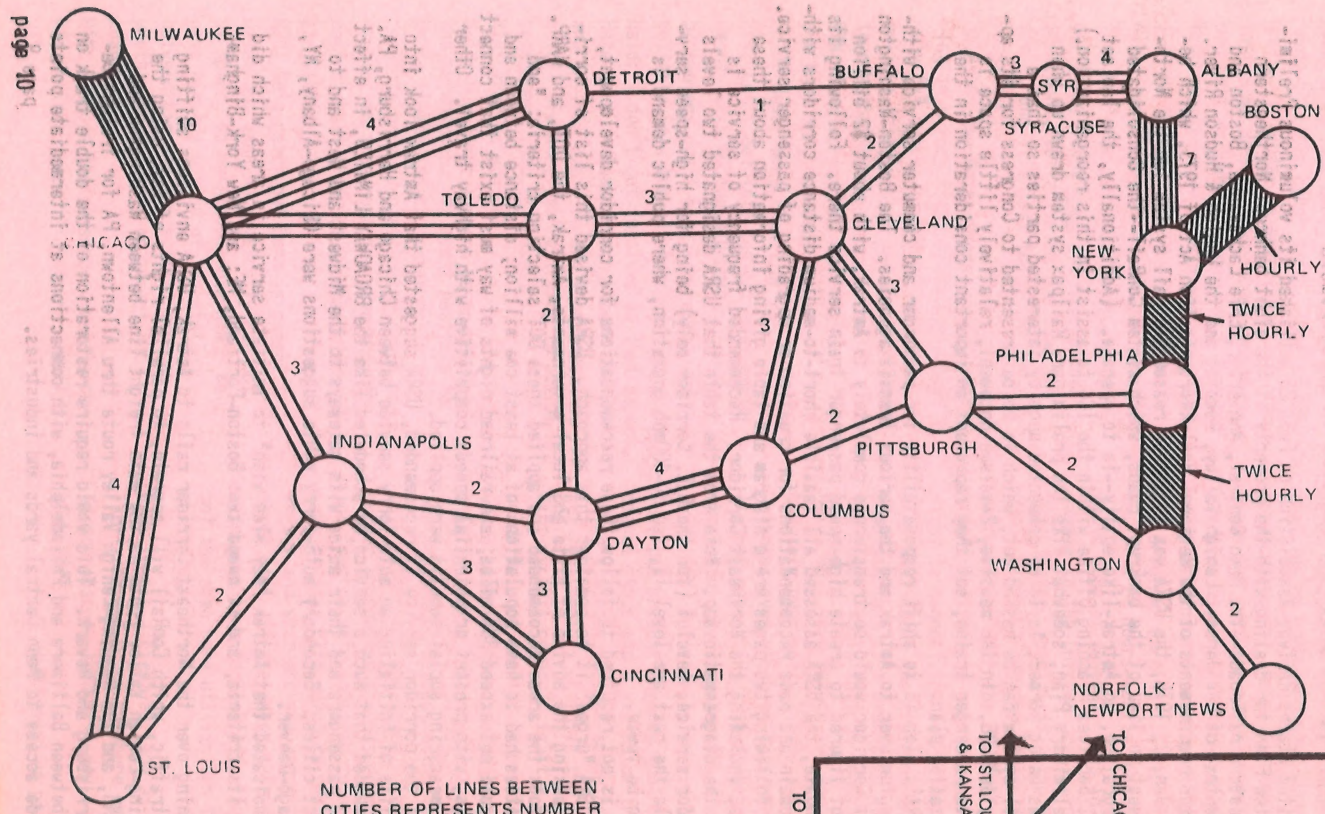
Amtrak is not required to follow these recommendations for corridor development, but the USRA "urges" it to consider this approach. USRA devised this list of corridors by seeking the advice of state and local governments, Amtrak, the DOT, and NARP. Then it took the areas recommended and applied these DOT selection criteria: "end point" cities had to have populations of at least one million; distance between end points could not exceed 300 miles; and railroad rights of way must exist that connect the points, with present or potential speeds competitive with highway travel. Other criteria measuring social benefit were applied.

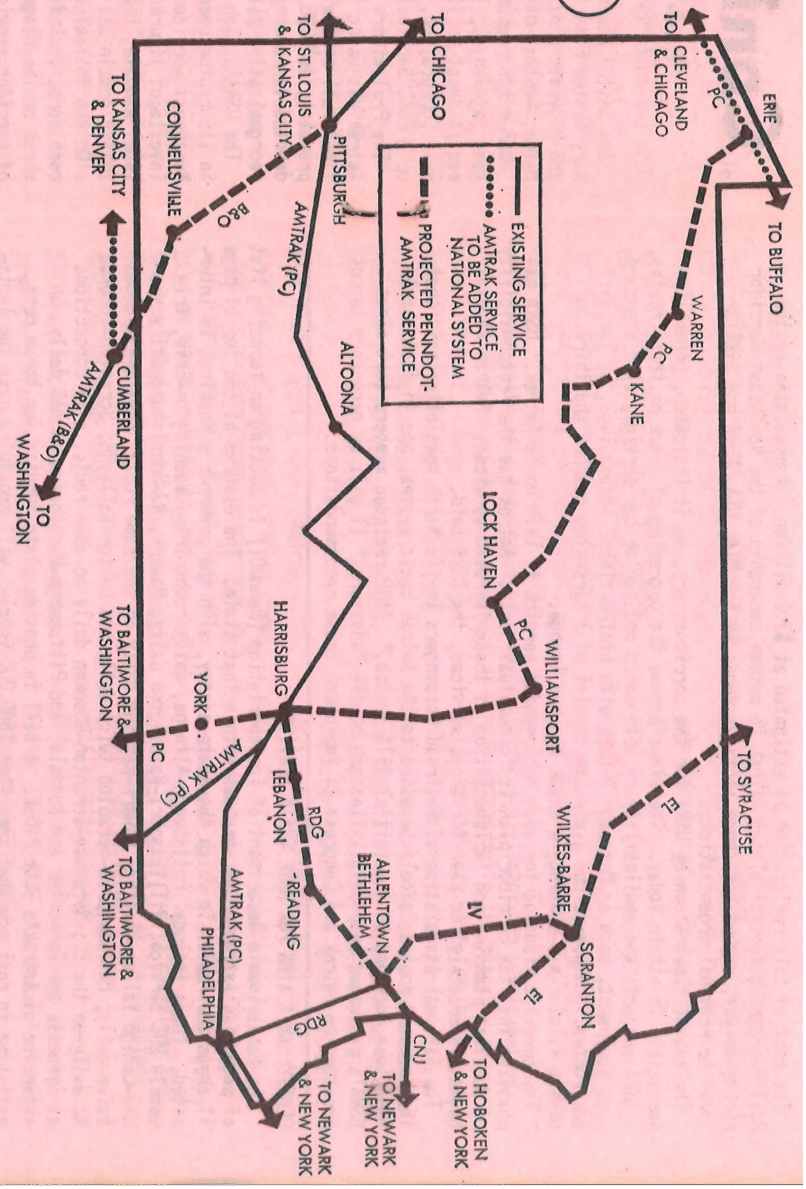
Besides the corridor service it recommended, USRA suggested that Amtrak look into the benefits of initiating an auto-ferry service between Chicago and Harrisburg, PA. It recommended that such a service be scheduled like the BROADWAY LIMITED, in effect providing passengers and their autos with gateways to the Midwest and West and to East Coast cities. Secondary auto-ferry route suggestions were Chicago-Albany, NY, and Chicago-Denver.

USRA indicated that Amtrak "may also wish" to initiate service in areas which did not meet its criteria; and it named two: Boston-Portland, ME; and New York-Binghamton.

In turning over the Northeast Corridor rails to Amtrak, USRA envisions shifting freight traffic, which ConRail will operate, to parallel rights of way, using the B&O-Reading-Lehigh Valley route as the main freight line between Washington and Newark, NJ, and the Reading-Lehigh Valley route thru Allentown, PA for freight between Harrisburg and Newark. This would require restoration of the double track on the B&O between Baltimore and Philadelphia, with connections at intermediate points to provide access to Penn Central yards and industries.

The proposed ConRail network of passenger train corridors, shown in diagram below and table on p. 11. Diagram at right shows additional routes proposed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).





Corridor	Present service level			Recommended service level	
	Transit time [1]	Number of daily round trips [1]	Highway travel times [2]	Transit time	Number of daily round trips
Level I:					
Northeast Corridor:					
New York to Washington	3'03"	30	6'15"	2'30"	[3]
New York to Boston	4'30"	11	5'00"	3'00"	[3]
Level II:					
Chicago to Milwaukee	1'30"	7	2'15"	1'15"	10
New York to Buffalo	8'30"	3	10'00"	7'20"	[4]
Chicago to St. Louis	5'00"	3	6'30"	4'30"	4
Chicago to Detroit	6'50"	2	6'00"	5'00"	4
Detroit to Cincinnati	None	0	6'00"	5'30"	2
Pittsburgh to Indianapolis	8'20"	[5] 1	8'00"	7'30"	2
Chicago to Cincinnati	9'00"	[5] 1	6'45"	6'15"	3
Cleveland to Pittsburgh	None	0	3'15"	3'00"	3
Cleveland to Cincinnati	None	0	5'45"	5'30"	3
Cleveland to Buffalo	None	0	4'15"	3'15"	2
Philadelphia to Pittsburgh	7'16"	[5] 2	7'15"	7'00"	2
Washington to Pittsburgh	8'19"	([5] [6])	6'00"	6'00"	2
Washington to Norfolk	None	0	5'00"	4'00"	2
Detroit to Buffalo	5'05"	1	7'45"	5'00"	1
Cleveland to Chicago	None	0	8'00"	5'45"	3
Indianapolis to St. Louis	4'56"	[5] 1	5'00"	4'00"	2

[1] Based on current Amtrak timetable.

[2] Modified Rand McNally trip times which reflect 55 mph speed limit.

[3] By 1990 frequency should be ¼-hourly New York to Washington, and ½-hourly New York to Boston; by 1982 frequency should be ½-hourly New York to Washington, and hourly New York to Boston.

[4] 3 round trips Buffalo to Syracuse; 4 round trips Syracuse to Albany; 7 round trips Albany to New York.

[5] Long distance trains operating in proposed corridors.

[6] 1 daily round trip plus 1 additional round trip triweekly via Harrisburg. Also 1 daily round trip Washington to Cumberland.

The cost of this restoration is estimated at $300 million. A provision of the Rail Reorganization Act allows Amtrak to assume ownership of the Northeast Corridor rights-of-way, except for those sections owned by the MTA, CTA, MBTA and similar local or regional organizations.

The travel times shown by USRA for the corridors are, as it indicates, generally impossible to attain today. The times assume the upgrading of track on these routes.

USRA suggests the availability of both coach and parlor car service, with standardized equipment, such as Metroshell cars with bidirectional locomotives, on the various routes. USRA mentions a minimum consist of 3 cars--two coaches and third car having first class seating, a snack bar and lounge.

The specific planning for such recommended service is left up to Amtrak. USRA emphasizes that the corridor plan is "conceptual" only. Amtrak has the "responsibility" of detailed planning and implementation of these improved services. Amtrak should begin "immediately" to plan for these services, the USRA said.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers in its March newsletter said that the proposed routes "should be added to the Amtrak basic system, and in fact should have been included in the initial 1971 system." NARP reminded members that since USRA's passenger responsibilities are mostly "advisory," it will be necessary to put pressure on Amtrak and Congress to implement these recommendations.

PENNSYLVANIA AIMS FOR MORE TRAIN SERVICE

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is backing an imposing list of potential Amtrak 403-b services within that state. The diagram at the top of page 11 shows the routes in which the state agency, with the governor's backing, is interested. These include: Pittsburgh-Altoona, daily round trip; Washington-Erie, tri-weekly RDC service; Williamsport-Washington daily; Newark, NJ-Harrisburg daily via CNJ-Lehigh Valley-Reading; Newark-Reading daily on the same route; Newark-Allentown twice daily; Philadelphia-Scranton twice daily via Lehigh ValleyRR; Scranton-Hoboken NJ daily on the EL; Syracuse-Scranton-Hoboken daily on same route, with connections at Syracuse for Rochester and Buffalo; and Pittsburgh-Washington on B&O daily, an extension of Amtrak's BLUE RIDGE. A bill to provide state funding for these runs, estimated to cost somewhat more than $500,000 yearly, will hopefully pass the legislature soon, a PennDOT spokesman said.

BOSTON & MAINE NOTES

by Pete Roehm and Dave Foley

Much speculation on the proposed Cape Cod service has hit the press since the early USRA-RSPO hearings last spring, but however desired this service would be, it now ranks as a very low priority, mainly due to the minimum cost in current dollars of 14 million to get it going. Even at that, a cross-platform change would be required in Braintree from the present soon-to-be-extended Quincy rail rapid line of MBTA.

Service to Ayer, Littleton, and West Acton terminated on Feb. 28, as these 3 towns failed to sign their contracts. Involved are 2 trains each way 6 days a week and one on Sunday, all being extensions of runs terminating usually at South Acton where all present Fitchburg Division passenger service now ends.

Negotiations continue for the sale of the B&M lines within the I-495 belt to the MBTA. Presently the MBTA is offering a current market price of $26 million, whereas the Trustees seek an "assembly value" of from 3 times this amount to more, or the cost that would be entailed to purchase the right of way were it to be done today from the hundreds of private landowners. The real threat of complete bus-stitution by mid-year remains should the B&M not sell for a reasonable price.

Track rebuilding work along the Eastern Route will hopefully begin this spring. Such construction will eventually result in 70mph commuter operations on the line south of Beverly and 55-60 on both the Ipswich/Newburyport arm of the former mainline and the Gloucester Branch to Rockport. This latter segment will be cover3d in more detail in a future writeup, as it remains one of the most scenic daylight runs in New England's passenger rail picture.

Negotiations are on to secure hourly service from Boston west over the Boston & Albany mainline to Framingham; however, a train crew consist clause in an old Commonwealth law is presently hindering the outcome.

(continued from page 8)

Held: When you look at the ticket lift purely as it relates to the passenger count on that train, it's very well within the limitations of the number of coach seats that you provided; but because of the children...because of these factors that you just didn't expect--all of a sudden, you're using more coach seats, and unfortunately, you're flowimg over into your service cars (dome car, lounge, diner) which are put there for the very specific purpose of the convenience of the passengers traveling long distances--and they get used wrongly.

RTN: That's what I mean. Amtrak will look the other way when it's not crowd-ing out another revenue passenger, but will Amtrak officially say: "No, you <u>have</u> to carry that kid in your lap because otherwise this other passenger has to stand?

Held: We've never taken a ...

RTN: What recourse does the passenger have who's standing next to a woman and a kid who are taking up an extra seat? Can he say "get out of there"?

Held: Not being in the service end of this thing, I'm not prepared or qualified to answer that.

RTN: Is the computer really accurate about showing space sold out when this space is really <u>not</u> sold out?

Held: It's a hundred percent accurate. To qualify that... first, the computer has been in operation since April 15, 1973. It averages close to 400,000 interactions a day--this is people asking the computer questions. We have not yet been able to determine that the computer deliberatly caused a duplicate set. We have never been able to sell an accommodation or a specific seat in any car twice. Once it's taken "off the shelf", and out of inventory, it is physically and technically impossible for that system to sell that accommodation again. As I said earlier, there's no way that we can prevent a person who has ticket stock and a validator from doing that, but there's no way that we can fool the computer.

RTN: How big is the problem of no-shows?

Held: It ranges anywhere from, depending on your route, 12 to 18% sometimes to 20%.

RTN: Is that taken into consideration when Amtrak sells the space?

Held: The no-show space, we have specifically designated as "train sales space" that we release to the conductor and that is clearly high-lighted in our inspection booklet. This tells the conductor the no-show space that we designate to him for train sale.

RTN: That's the way the computer's programmed at the moment. If everybody showed up 100% of the time, everybody would have a seat--provided the equipment was there as the computer understood it to be.

Held: That's correct.

RTN: But the problem is that the computer is not told that a car is yanked out of service?

Held: Oh yes it is told. But unfortunately, it's told on the day the train operates.

RTN: So that's where problems develop. But if the car is yanked before <u>train</u> day, the computer has time to do something about it.

RTN: What's behind the situation in which a family, reserves seats way in advance and when they arrive on the train, the seats are not together. In fact, sometimes spread all over the car.

Held: Anytime you have a load factor that exceeds 90%, it's very difficult to get seats together. It's no different even if you circumvented the computer, as it reflects only those seats that are still left in the system. It's simply saying that the last 10% of the space on a train is probably separated and

that's no different than on a plane. The airlines avoid specific seat assign-ments other than at the gate. So if you're one of the last check-ins on a 100% full plane, I guarantee you that if you're traveling with your wife you will get 2 middle seats and certainly not together. It's no different here. As the seats fill up, the most desirable get sold first. If you're last when you come to pick up your ticket, normally very close to departure, the computer spits out "1,3, and 47". Those are the last three seats.

RTN: The computer doesn't know desirability.

Held: Oh it does! That's the logic of the seat assignments.

RTN: Ticket agents seem to be getting more and more paperwork. Which is more valuable: efficient operation at the customer's end or accurate information on paper at Amtrak's end?

Held: This office is not responsible for ticketing locations. I am not aware of any additional responsibilities given to ticket agents.

RTN: In other words, in another month or so, another directive comes down to the agents that they're going to have to keep an accurate record of how many tickets are sold and yet the forms themselves do that, for example.

Held: I'm surprised that you say that because I was not aware that there were any additional checks and balances built into the system.

RTN: A directive came down "you will not by-pass the computer". It doesn't say why, just that it will be done the proper way but the "proper way" is not "proper," it never is. It may be here, in this office, but not necessarily proper in Alberquerque or Quincy, Illinois. Circumstances vary, that's why agents by-pass the directives sometimes. If an agent is busy filling out forms and reports, how can he answer the phone and vice-versa? If he waits till after business hours a directive comes down saying "no more over-time".

Held: I'll give you my thoughts on it. First of all the ticketing locations...

RTN: Let's take Oxnard, California.

Held: The phone should not be ringing at Oxnard. What would it be ringing for other than to find out about a piece of baggage. There should be very few public calls into Oxnard. And aside from two trains, one in each direction, which requires ten minutes plus an hour of activity prior to each train, I would suspect that Oxnard, California, would have some time on its hands.

RTN: I picked Oxnard because I'm familiar with it and they <u>are</u> busy. The phone does ring constantly. "Will the train be on time?" "I want to buy a ticket from Sioux Falls, South Dakota to Oxnard". It doesn't go to the res bureau.

Held: That's my point. There is a published 800 number which would take care of all that. There is one for on-time information also, which should be used by the public. If you call right now I can show how we reflect that in the system.

RTN: I'd like to see that because it hasn't worked for me. The reason I say that is because I've tried it and they'd say something like "Train #1 left Tucson 3 hours late...that's the latest information we have" but then the train pulls into Pomona on time. If I had passed the time elsewhere, I would have missed the train. That's how accurate calling that number is compared to calling the station itself.

Held: All of our clerks in the res office are instructed to very specifically qualify any late posting of any train.

RTN: That's why the phone rings in Oxnard, to get more accurate information.

Held: But he doesn't really have more accurate information.

RTN: All he does is ask the SP how number 11 is doing and he gets the answer--"It cleared Santa Barbara about 15 minutes ago."

Held: In this book I doubt if you could find Oxnard's number unless you knew.

RTN; No, you wouldn't. You'd have to look over here...and you'd find an 800 number, too.

Held: The 800 number would go in to the res office.

RTN: But when they want to buy a ticket, they don't look at this, they look in their local phone book.

Held: It's not even in the local phone book. Unless you're familiar with the phone number in Oxnard, I tell you it'd be damn difficult for you to get it. You would get it because you're familiar with Oxnard and you've made a point to get the number. But John Q. Public the average passenger could not find ...I could not find the telephone number up in Brattlebury.

RTN: Yet the phones do ring in Oxnard and we have this lack of communication. That's where the difficulty comes in, because the ticket agent who has to face the public feels that the people who issue him directives don't know the proper situation and don't give a damn about him and so he won't give a damn about the public. So there's a problem in the station, not as bad as it used to be, because there are trained employees.

Held: We don't shy away from a problem, we try to correct it. The information that is given out by the clerks is on a basis of being 100% accurate and honest. All you can do is give the information you have at that point in time. It's unfortunate that if the train makes up time, you cannot get that information back to the caller later. It's scary. The agent is trained to say it might make up time.

RTN: How is he trained? I've seen how he is trained-- a sheet of paper comes out, or 5 or 6 pages stating: in this situation you will say this, in the other you will say that. The agent looks at that and says "they don't know what they're talking about" and it goes in to the wastebasket. Sure, you <u>do know</u> what you're talking about, you've done research but the agent feels that it doesn't apply in his location because certain factors weren't considered, so he dismisses the whole directive. To me, this is what takes place and shouldn't. Getting back to space, how many people have to ask for space until an extra car is added?

Held: It's based on when the normal consist is sold out and we are not up to train limit. We initiate a request for overflow equipment when the train is about 90% full.

RTN: When a customer goes on the waiting list--how many people go on the list before the extra car is added?

Held: Potentially none. They end up on the waiting list because normally our trains fill up...let's take the Christmas period, Dec 16th through Dec 24th. For all intents and purposes completely sold out around the middle of September. It was then we requested from our operating department extra overflow cars. Some trains were already up to the 18 car limit and there was nothing we could do. That's cast in concrete--the 18 car limit. But... back in September, operations doesn't know what cars--if any, will be available for use at our request for December. So then, a waiting list starts to build up. In the case of the Florida Trains, where there is a massive demand --on a peak day (Dec 21st, say) you might have 400 or 500 on the wait list for coaches alone. There's no way we can satisfy these demands--even with four trains.

RTN: Taking an example of other trains, does an extra car get added when 3 people are the overflow, or when ten are the overflow or how many?

Held: Our request on overflow cars is based on the <u>anticipated</u> or <u>forcasted</u> demand. If a train is full, seven days before departure, in the computer, we could probably sell another 44 or 80

seats. We know that a large percentage of our demand comes within the last seven days. So with that sold-out situation, I know we could sell one, maybe two more cars and I'd add them on. I wouldn't hesitate to add a coach 2 days before departure. I know that on Florida trains, I could generate about 15% capacity demand in the last day before departure. Now, I'm using Florida Trains because we're sitting here in the East and the trains are right here. But let's take the COAST STARLIGHT. At Seattle on day of departure--just between Seattle and Portland, I could sell 25-30 seats.

RTN: I'm still a little vague about just <u>when</u> extra cars are actually added.

Held: Sold out conditions--a stop-sale condition. That's the criterion, not any individual wait list. We still maintain a wait-list because we can't get the cars from Operations as quickly as we'd wish. And, we're not sure if we're going to get them or not. Now, if we do get those extra cars, then the first person on the waiting list gets the first seats, and so forth. But you see, there's so <u>much</u> wait list--our demand is so great --that there is no way we can possibly avoid building up a wait list. The system cannot operate fast enough. How does Operations know where they're going to have cars for Christmas? As we get closer to departure, the picture becomes clearer. We then can see we'll have two extra coaches avail-able for a particular train, but you've already got 500 on the wait list. We could actually run an extra train to Florida on certain days.

RTN: Talking about the small situation, on the small long-distance train. Say this train's four coaches are sold out and the rest are put on a waiting list. When do you decide there are enough people on the waiting list to add...

Held: There is no relationship. I keep telling you that. You see, when the train is sold out, <u>that in itself</u> is enough reason to order an extra car. We have sufficient faith in the last minute demand to support use of that car.

RTN: The problem is, then, most of the time, the extra car just is not available to put on.

Held: Yes, particularly last summer. We looked everyplace for cars. But reservation-wise, it was certainly much easier for the passenger to get his reservations into the computer and be sure of accommodations than ever before.

RTN: Well, you've certainly been very helpful in explaining these intricacies to us. By the way, Mr. Held, what is your favorite Amtrak train?

Held: The SOUTHWEST LIMITED. I say that because the standard of service is just excellent. The old Santa Fe-type of service is just outstanding.

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At this point, Mr. Held invited me down the hall and introduced me to Mr. Scolaro and I saw the computer in action.

AN RGZ ADDENDUM: Chambers of Commerce officials from the Glenwood Springs area have discussed the RGZ with D&RGW president Aydelott, and were told that the reasons for not seeking discontinuance of the train are (1) business is up (2) fare increases have narrowed the operating loss. Mr. Glenn Lee, writing from Glenwood Springs, says that patronage of the RGZ was so heavy out of Denver on March 24 that the train was 40min late leaving. There were 237 paying passengers: 150 for Glenwood Springs, 50 for Salt Lake, and most of the rest for Grand Junction. The train had a 7-car consist: #1230, 3 domes, "Silver Pine," diner and observation. That gave about 215 coach seats for the exceptionally heavy midweek crowd.

Urban-Suburban Transit

BART WILL REMAIN unique in California, it appears, after an official "major policy" declaration on March 26 by state Business and Transportation Secretary Donald E. Burns, speaking to a gathering of traffic engineers in Los Angeles. Burns said that "Dreams of bullet trains that zip commuters from their doors to their jobs at 100 mph will have to remain dreams. Such systems are expensive, inflexible, impractical and they are almost exclusively designed to meet the needs of the upper middle class commuter and downtown real estate interests." He said that the new Brown administration has "no intention of participating in the construction of any more Cadillac-commuter systems." At the same time he warned that "There will not be any new 10-lane freeways." The new administration plans to eliminate the State Highway Commission and several other transportation agencies, replacing them with a single state transportation commission with greater powers.

BART HAS SAVED nine lives in its 2½ years of operation, the transit system pointed out in a newsletter to patrons. It has carried 32 million people safely for almost 500 million passenger miles without a single serious passenger injury. If all those people had ridden in autos instead, statistics would predict that 9 of them would have dies, BART pointed out. The newsletter is part of a campaign to counter the bad image BART has received in some segments of the press. BART found that non-commuter ridership fell off sharply after news of the fatal employee accident reported here earlier. And when news got around of the potential electric shock to passengers who touch the metal of the train while boarding, BART issued a bulletin which said "Don't touch the exterior of trains," while assuring passengers that hazards in the system are not critical and are being alleviated.

PHILADELPHIA'S TRANSIT SYSTEM ended a week-long strike on March 26 with a new two-year contract for the Transport Workers Union. The SEPTA system was shut down, creating jammed traffic conditions on streets and on the Reading and Penn Central lines, which were still running.

A GALLUP POLL released in February found that riders interviewed in January reported they use their automobiles 5% less than a year earlier in commuting.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY on March 15 introduced a new type of air-conditioned commuter car on the Penn Central's Harlem Line. The new cars will serve stations where high-level platforms have been built to accommodate them.

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION will shortly begin an investigation of conditions at bus terminals in the nation, beginning with a look at the cleanliness, ticketing practices and other adequacy features of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Bus Terminal in New York City.

A RECENT STUDY just released has found that bus drivers on long distance routes suffer back problems, varicose veins, hernia and hemorrhoids that seem to be caused by vehicle vibration. RTN reader Frederic Hirsch writes: "RTN staff and readers alike have frequently complained about the rough and rocky train rides they've experienced in their travels. But how many times I've been jostled about on buses! Just the other day I had to revert to the bus and tried in desperation to read a magazine. Between stop-and-go traffic, pot holes, frost heaves, road construction, and jerky stops and starts, it was virtually impossible! Even on superhighways, I encountered that rhythmic bounce over the cracks in the pavement. Granted, the railroads must make major improvements to attain a smooth trip for their riders, but let's remember that the bus (the railroads' main competition) is of no consolation for comfort."

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"A major cause of Amtrak's red-ink troubles is congressional pressure that has forced the corporation to provide ridiculously uneconomical service to areas like Southern Montana (at the insistence of Mike Mansfield, Senate majority leader) and the far reaches of West Virginia (at the demand of Representative Harley O. Staggers chairman of the House Interstate Commerce Committee).

--Seattle Times editorial, March 12

MIXED TRAIN OF THOUGHTS (continued from page 5)

MARCH 21, 1975: Stricken with flu, we lie abed and watch the leafless elms move in the wind as the endless rain pours down on the windowpane. Why is the sky weeping today? Could it be because it's the fifth anniversary of the last run of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR? Gil Hulin sent us a photo of the last CZ for the occasion, which we weren't able to print this issue..... THE WEEKEND STORM continued, with the Sierra passes closed by snow and jammed with miles of useless autos. Happines was, on that occasion, the regular, on-time progression of the SFZ from Chicago thru the snowy scene, with interesting views of highway 80 below with thousands of impatient drivers waiting for the storm to clear. The RENO FUN TRAIN did get delayed about 5 hours that weekend on its eastward run. And the two COAST STARLIGHTS were blocked by a mudslide north of Dunsmuir during the night of March 24. Passengers were bused from one train to another, and the directions of the two consists reversed to continue their journeys..... AN AUTHORIZATION BILL to provide Amtrak with $1.1 billion over the next three years is moving thru Congress. This includes $63 million in additional funds for thecurrent year. A separate appropriations bill must be passed later before Amtrak gets its money. The new bill includes a clause to eliminate the $60 thousand salary limit for Amtrak executives..... AMTRAK ANNOUNCED ON March 18 that it is restructuring Milwaukee-Chicago service, in conjunction with the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation. Effective April 27, the preliminary schedule is as follows: (times are Milwaukee departure & Chicago arrival,respectively) 7:20am, 8:52am; 9:20am, 10:52am; 12:20pm, 1:52pm; 1:15pm, 2:50pm; 3:20pm, 4:52pm; 6:50pm, 8:20pm; and on Sunday only, 8:20pm, 9:52pm. For Chicago departures & Milwaukee arrivals: 8:30am, 10:02am (Mon.-Sat.); 10:30am, 11:59am; 12:40pm, 2:12pm; 1:30pm, 2:59pm; 4:30pm, 6:03pm; 6:30pm, 8:02pm; and 10:30pm, 12:02am (Sundays only). The 7:20am departure from Milwaukee is also Mon.-Sat. only. Amtrak said food service is being expanded to 3 trains daily and Amtrak is allocating refrubished cars to the service as they become available. Other features of the 6-point corridor plan entered into by Amtrak and the state are a farereduction, more advertising, and renewed emphasis on free parking lot facilities at Milwaukee.....

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AS THE MOUNTAINEER began operation, Amtrak announced a special round trip coach excursion fare for the train, effective April 7. The excursion fare is 1½ times the regular one-way rate. These tickets must be purchased in advance, and are good for a 90-day period only, with no stopovers, and children's half-fares the only discounts applicable to them..... NATION'S LARGEST RAILROAD union, the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, is free to strike at 12:01am on April 18, raising the threat of a nationwide rail shutdown this coming month..... STATES THAT SUBSIDIZE rail passenger service under the 403-b provision in the Amtrak law should have their own representatives on the Amtrak board of directors, Illinois and Michigan officials have told the ICC. Richard Tower, manager of rail operations for the state of Michigan, told the ICC that those two states will ask for a seat on the Board. Tower also told the press that Amtrak ridership in Michigan has increased 51% from 1973 to 1974..... A FREAK ACCIDENT on March 16 killed the engineer of the westbound SOUTHWEST LIMITED near Williams, AZ. A passing Santa Fe freight lost a piece of rail it was hauling, and the rail struck the Amtrak engine, snapping off an 8-foot section which struck the 3ngineer, killing him instantly. Another cab occupant received a knee injury. The railroad was trying to determine the cause of the accident..... A WASHINGTON TEENAGE boy fell asleep on BN railroad tracks two miles north of Benton City and was killed by the westbound EMPIRE BUILDER. The incident occurred on March 9..... ILLINOIS GOVERNOR WALKER is backing the expenditure of $1.9 million to restore railroad stations in the northern half of the state. Thirty -three stations are involved..... THE CITIES OF Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and Cheyenne have withdrawn their support of the coming American Freedom Train, and the exhibit train will bypass them on its tour that starts in April..... THE HIGHWAY LOBBY never gives up: an outfit calling itself "Citizens for Glenwood Canyon Scenic Corridor" (Box 7, El Jebel, CO 81628) is pushing construction of Interstate 70 thru scenic Glenwood Canyon, route of the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, 12.9 miles at $500 million.....

Express Ads

TIMETABLES - Buying all public TTs. Amtrak and earlier. Send your list. Collections too. C. F. Loucks, 199 Wayland Street, Hamden, CT 06518.

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MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS has been the driving force behind the rail renaissance in Michigan. Our results: THE BLUE WATER, THE EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS, and the MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE. We are presently involved in 4 ICC cases; we will do more, but we need support--YOUR support. Membership dues are $5 per year; with memberships expiring in December. Membership includes a subscription to the WOLVERINE MAINLINER, our monthly publication. MARP, Box 6901, Grosse Pte, MI 48236

PLAN YOUR FAMILY VACATION around the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TIMETABLE COLLECTORS Annual Convention in Philadelphia (the Bicentennial City) July 31, Aug 1, 2, 3 at the Penn Center Sheraton Hotel. 4 big days of buying, selling & trading railroadiana plus fan trips, a fabulous banquet featuring the renowned Bruce Heard, Chief of Amtrak Timetables, an auction and much more. Full particulars on the convention and membership from Bob Russell, 400 S. Chester Pike, Apt 6-B, Glenolden PA 19036 (215) 212-7251. Be there to believe it.

TIMETABLE BARGAINS GALORE, GRAB BAGS, $13 worth of Public Timetables only $6.00, $30 worth only $12.00. Also have amazing clear plastic slip covers for public timetables only 8¢ each postpaid. Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Rd., Holland PA 18966.

POSTCARDS OF RR depots wanted-used ok. M. Blunker, 4573 E. Iowa, Fresno CA 93702.

MENU COLLECTORS - Exact reprints of SP Dining Car Menus: Lark, Cascade, Golden State, City of San Francisco, Sunset: 1951-67. Complete set of 15 menus for $12. Will sell separately, or consider trade. Send SSAE for list.
Dennis Ryan, 435 N. Euclid #20, Pasadena, Calif. 91101.

CHICAGO AND EASTERN ILLINOIS, South Shore Line, Chicago Great Western and North Shore Line uniform buttons 60¢ each. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844

CONRAIL AND THE NORTHEAST! Get the latest update on ConRail plans, abandonments and gateways in THE BLOCK LINE, official news bulletin of Tri-State Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. Issued monthly except July & August. Only $3.50 per year postpaid. WRITE: TRI-STATE NRHS c/o Tom Nemeth, 210 Perrine Avenue, Piscataway, New Jersey 08854.

LET'S GET AMTRAK and your Congressman to run the CZ for summer '76 and name the Chic.-Cincy-DC train the GEORGE WASHINGTON. Wanted: TIMETABLES-GN-NP-BN (50's-60's-70's)-first two Amtrak (send list and prices); and any TEENAGE RAILFAN to correspond with. Thank you. Merlin L. Marlowe, RR 2, Fairfax, MN 55332.

Harry: I didn't try to avoid meeting you at the station; our train was detoured on another route because of some track problem and I'm still riding somewhere in the Midwest. Will try to telephone you soon. --Lost in the system.

INFORMATION FOR ADVERTISERS: Express Ads cost just 50¢ per line for line of 80 spaces. DISPLAY ADS: Maximum ad size ½ page (4x5 or 2½x8 inches) at $12.50. Smaller sizes priced in proportion. Send your ad copy and remittance to: Message Media - RTN, Ad Dept., P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you.

Soviet engineers have completed project design for the world's first pneumatic subway, Engineering News-Record magazine has reported. The line will be built in Zelenograd, about 20 miles north of Moscow, and will be propelled by air pressure in the one-way tunnels. Pressure will be .28 of an atmosphere above that outside the tunnels. A pneumatic freight railway now operates in the Georgian Caucasus.